

"France Is At War": Hollande Unleashes 2nd Day Of ISIS Strikes, Mobilizes 115,000, Moves To Change Constitution

France, still reeling from the carnage that unfolded in the streets of Paris last Friday, conducted dozens upon dozens of police raids on Tuesday, after more than 160 similar operations carried out on Monday led to the discovery of numerous weapons including a rocket launcher, Kalashnikov, and a bulletproof vest.

French authorities are still largely in the dark regarding how many people were ultimately involved in the attack and with suspected "mastermind" Abdelhamid Abaaoud out of reach in Syria, police are focused on locating Salah Abdeslam who allegedly helped with logistics and rented a black Volkswagen Polo used by the gunmen who stormed the Bataclan concert hall.

Of course really, the raids are a frantic attempt to track down and neutralize anything and everything before something else bad happens. As Prime Minister Manuel Valls said on France Inter radio, **"we don't know if there are accomplices in Belgium and in France... we still don't know the number of people involved in the attacks."**

Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve says **more than 100 people have been placed under house arrest** and dozens have been arrested in the sweeping crackdown. "Under a state of emergency – which has been in place since the attacks on Friday – security services, police have extra powers and freedom to make arrests, search houses and confiscate weapons without judicial oversight," [The Sydney Morning Herald notes](#) .

President Hollande told a joint session of the French parliament on Monday that "France is at war" and that he wants the state of emergency extended by three months. Hollande also proposed constitutional changes. As The Herald put it on Tuesday, **Hollande wants "to create a new version of 'exceptional measures', giving the government some emergency powers available under martial law."** Here's [Le Monde](#) (translated), noting that Hollande's proposals mirror George Bush's Patriot Act:

*But that wants Francois Hollande, is "to provide an appropriate tool for founding taking exceptional measures, for a certain period without going through the state of siege nor deny civil liberties". Clearly, this would be a somewhat state of emergency "light" in terms of the powers granted to the State, but may last longer. **A proposal which is not without recalling the "Patriot Act" that the Bush administration had vote after September 11, 2001.***

Here's the bullet point [summary from BBC](#) :

- Extension of state of emergency by three months
- **Changes to the constitution to allow the government to revoke citizenship of any convicted terrorists of dual nationality.** Currently only those born outside France and naturalised can lose their citizenship
- **Measures to speed up expulsion** of foreign nationals considered a threat to public order
- Budget increases and extra recruitment to security forces and judiciary

If some of that sounds like it could be a slippery slope to you, you're probably correct. "Those returning from Syria could be placed under house arrest," [AFP reported](#) , citing a government source.

Cazeneuve also said 115,000 security personnel have been mobilized in order to "ensure Frances security."

The police officers, gendarmes and soldiers are being deployed across France. Hollande also evoked a never before used clause in the Treaty on EU which compels member nations to provide France with "aid and assistance by all means in their power"

Meanwhile, the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle will be deployed to the eastern Mediterranean while French fighter jets pounded Raqqa for the second day in a row. Residents of the city (or "captives" as they might more appropriately be called given the fact that between ISIS and airstrikes they live in a perpetual state of paralysis), describe the last two nights as "insane." One activist [who spoke to al-Jazeera](#) described two "insane" nights and interestingly, also said that the French aren't really bombing anything and the only real damage is being done by the Russians:

However, a media activist in Raqqa, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told Al Jazeera on Tuesday that French air strikes had targeted abandoned ISIL bases in the suburbs of the city where there are no civilians or ISIL fighters.

"It has been two insane nights. Abandoned ISIL posts were targeted at the entrance of the city, along with ISIL checkpoints and several other points. Electricity and water have been cut off as supply lines were hit too.

"We can confirm that there were no civilians killed or injured in the latest French air strikes.

The Syrian activist in Raqqa said that in the past few days Russian air strikes had caused the most destruction.

"Last week, Russian air strikes destroyed one of the main bridges in the city in addition to the national hospital. Most hospitals in the city have been destroyed in Raqqa," he said.

"Russian air strikes have resulted in so much destruction. If these countries wanted to bomb the heartland of ISIL, they could have done so. But they still have not targeted the group's most important bases.

"This is what we do not understand. The targets bombed by French warplanes were mostly abandoned by ISIL fighters.

"Raqqa is devastated. Raqqa has endured the unbearable and we live in fear under ISIL's dictatorship.

*"A lot of people fled the the city. **In fact, most refugees heading to Europe are from Raqqa.***

A couple of things stand out here. First, note that according to the source cited above, the French (using US "intelligence") are hitting targets where there are no fighters. The Russians, on the other hand, are hitting anything and everything which could hint at what many have alluded to all along - namely that the US is either i) intentionally avoiding ISIS, ii) scared of collateral damage, or iii) some combination of both and that's now finding its way into French strikes via the provision of intelligence from Washington to Paris. Second, the Russians are the ones doing the real damage to ISIS although there is of course the allegation that they are targeting hospitals because these days, everyone has to accuse everyone else of bombing hospitals.

Finally, note that now, the French are doing exactly what they and other Western powers accused Russia of doing last month at Aleppo: exacerbating the migrant crisis by wreaking havoc on populated areas.

But we suppose they had no choice...



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